

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 H-01
NSC-05 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 EURE-00 OMB-01
/061 W

-----141729Z 036265 /45

O R 141709Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5626
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 02773

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AWACS, NATO, OCON, MILI, GW
SUBJECT: NATO AEW -- FRG POSITION

REF: BONN 2651

SUMMARY: DURING A FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION TO THE
AMBASSADOR'S MEETING LAST WEEK WITH MINISTER LEBER, THE
MINISTER'S PERSONAL ASSISTANT APPEARED MOST RELUCTANT
TO COMMIT THE FRG TO ANY DECISION TIME TABLE ON AWACS.
HE SUGGESTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO MEETING OF THE MINDS
BETWEEN LEBER AND UK DEFENCE MINISTER MULLEY LAST
WEEKEND AND IMPLIED THAT THE FINANCIAL PROBLEM STILL
WORRIED THE GERMANS. HE SAID LEBER WAS NOW ON VACATION
AND WOULD NOT IMMEDIATELY REPLY TO SECRETARY BROWN'S
LETTER. END SUMMARY.

1. FRG DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER'S PERSONAL ASSISTANT,
DR. BLOCH, TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR TODAY THAT IT WAS
UNCERTAIN WHEN THE FRG WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE A COMMIT-
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MENT TO AN AWACS PURCHASE.

2. BLOCK SAID THE FRG WOULD NEED MORE TIME, BUT HE DID
NOT SAY HOW MUCH TIME. HE SAID THE MATTER WAS BEING
DISCUSSED WITHIN THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND THE ALLIES
SHOULD "NOT PUSH."

3. DISCUSSING THE FINANCIAL SHARES FOR AWACS, BLOCH SAID THE FRG REGARDED LABERGE'S COST-SHARING PLAN AS A "PROPOSAL" BUT NOT AS A FINAL POSITION. HE SAID IT APPEARED CLEAR FROM CLOSE ANALYSIS OF THE PLAN THAT NOT ALL THE MONEY WOULD BE FORTHCOMING AS PROPOSED. THEREFORE, HE SAID, THERE WOULD BE A SHORTFALL (WHICH, HE IMPLIED, WOULD FALL AT LEAST IN PART ON THE FRG). HE SAID TO DATE THERE WAS NO CLEAR ESTIMATE OF WHAT AWACS WOULD COST, AND THEREFORE NO BASIS FOR A REQUEST TO PARLIAMENT.

4. WHEN THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR SUGGESTED FURTHER MEETINGS OF THE FINANCIAL EXPERTS TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE, BLOCH REPLIED THAT THOSE EXPERTS DID NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO RESOLVE ANYTHING AND IT WAS, THEREFORE, BEST THAT THEY SHOULD NOT MEET AGAIN SOON. HE ALSO SAID THE FRG SAW LITTLE TO BE GAINED FROM A DEFENSE MINISTERS MEETING UNTIL A SOLUTION HAD BEEN WORKED OUT. SUCH A MEETING WOULD ONLY DEMONSTRATE DISARRAY IN THE ALLIANCE IF NO AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED (AS, HE IMPLIED, WOULD HAPPEN).

5. BLOCH SAID THAT LEBER AND MULLEY HAD DISCUSSED AWACS BUT HAD NOT COME TO A MEETING OF THE MINDS. HE SAID EACH HAD RESTATED HIS OWN VIEWS. HE SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO DISCUSS THE MATTER FURTHER AT THE TIME OF PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER IN THE SPRING.

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6. REGARDING THE STATE OF THE GERMAN DECISION PROCESS, BLOCH SAID THE DEFENSE MINISTRY WAS NOW REPLYING TO CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S QUESTIONS. HE DID NOT SAY WHEN THE REPLY WOULD GO FORWARD, BUT HE SUGGESTED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE ARGUMENT ABOUT HOW TO APPORTION THE FINANCIAL BURDEN AMONG THE GERMAN SERVICES WHOSE FUNDS WERE ALREADY FULLY COMMITTED. AS FOR CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S SUGGESTION THAT SOME AWACS AIRCRAFT BE BROUGHT TO GERMANY FOR DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES, BLOCH SAID SUCH AN IDEA WOULD CERTAINLY MAKE SENSE "AT SOME POINT" BUT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE GOOD TO BRING THEM NOW. ASKED ABOUT WHEN LEBER WOULD REPLY TO SECRETARY BROWN'S LETTER, BLOCH SAID THAT LEBER HAD GONE ON VACATION BECAUSE HE HAD NOT YET FULLY RECOVERED FROM HIS DECEMBER ILLNESS AND THAT LEBER WOULD REPLY BY THE END OF THE MONTH WHEN HE RETURNED FROM VACATION.

7. COMMENT: BLOCH, WHO IS RELATIVELY NEW IN HIS POSITION, APPEARED MOST RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS AWACS IN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 02773

DETAIL OR TO INDICATE EXACTLY WHAT GERMAN THINKING WAS.
HE DID NOT EXPLAIN HOW A US-UK SUMMIT COULD RESOLVE
AWACS. HE CLEARLY SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE FRG WAS
HAVING GREAT DIFFICULTIES REACHING A DECISION. WE
ASSUME, FROM THE WAY HE HANDLED THE TOPIC, THAT THERE ARE
INTENSE DISPUTES ABOUT FUNDS. WE ASSUME THAT PEOPLE
LIKE LEBER AND BLOCH ARE URGING US TO EASE UP BECAUSE
THE DISCUSSIONS ARE VERY SENSITIVE AND ANY FORM OF
PRESSURE MIGHT BE RESENTED. WE ARE ALSO PICKING UP
SUGGESTIONS AT WORKING LEVELS THAT WE CANNOT EXPECT THE
FRG TO PRESS FORWARD WITH AWACS AFTER THE DIFFICULTIES
WITH THE TANK PROGRAM. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT THE
CHANCELLOR HAS SIMPLY INSTRUCTED EVERYBODY TO STOP
DISCUSSING THIS TOPIC BECAUSE HE WISHES TO HANDLE IT
HIMSELF.

8. PROCEEDING FROM THERE, WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT
MINISTER LEBER HAS NOT YET REPLIED TO SECRETARY BROWN
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BECAUSE HE DOES NOT WANT TO SAY NO BUT IS NOT ABLE, AT
LEAST AT THIS POINT, TO SAY YES.

9. GIVEN EVERYTHING WE ARE HEARING FROM THE FRG, WE
BELIEVE IT WOULD BE MOST UNWISE TO PRESS THE GERMANS HERE
ON AWACS IN THE NEAR TERM. IT MAY BE POSSIBLE IN THE
NATO FORUM, WHICH IS INTERNATIONAL, TO TAKE SOME STEPS
THAT WOULD PRESERVE THE MOMENTUM. WE DEFER TO AMBASSA-
DOR STRAUSSZ-HUPE FOR ANY SUGGESTIONS IN THAT FRAMEWORK.

10. WE HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE CHANCELLERY TO-
MORROW TO ATTEMPT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SCHMIDT'S
SUGGESTION REGARDING AWACS DEMONSTRATION FLIGHTS HERE.
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